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MIA KICKS OFF WORLD CUP TRAVEL SEASON WITH PRESS CONFERENCE AND SOCCER-THEMED CELEBRATION



Left to right: Brazilian dancers thrill passengers at MIA; MDAD Director Emilio T. González with former soccer pro Alex Lozano and GMCVB President and CEO Bill Talbert; the Brazilian percussion troop gets the party started.

Hi-res versions of these photos are available upon request.

(MIAMI, June 16, 2014) – As players took the field for the first match of the 2014 World Cup in Brazil on June 12, Miami International Airport held its own kickoff event to usher in a 31-day series of activities at the airport, which counts Brazil as its top international passenger market. Officials from the Miami-Dade Aviation Department (MDAD) and the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB), Brazilian Deputy-Consul Bruno Rodrigues, and airline partners serving Brazil gathered in MIA’s North Terminal for a press conference and celebration highlighting the many soccer-themed attractions that MIA and its business partners are offering to travelers during the month-long soccer tournament.

MIA will be the busiest U.S. gateway to Brazil for the World Cup, with service to 10 of the 12 host cities and more flights to Brazil than any other U.S. airport. Nearly 200,000 passengers are expected to travel through MIA on their way to and from Brazil during the competition. In addition to soccer fans, the airport has already welcomed tournament-bound national teams from the U.S., Nigeria and South Korea. Today’s press conference included remarks from MDAD Director Emilio T. González and GMCVB President and CEO Bill Talbert.

The kickoff celebration was set to the backdrop of an interactive mini-soccer field featuring demonstrations by a former professional soccer player, a children’s cart with soccer-themed face-painting, as well as free soccer balls promoting the

GMCVB's Miami Soccer Summer program (www.MiamiSoccerSummer.com). The event was capped off by a surprise performance by Brazilian dancers and percussionists that thrilled event attendees and passing travelers in the busy terminal. In addition to these soccer-themed attractions, MIA will also feature the following over the next four weeks:

- Nintendo Wii™ Soccer game stations;
- *Show Your Colors*, a soccer-themed art exhibit near Gate D-30 by students from Miami-Dade County's renowned DASH high school;
- World Cup and national team clothing and accessories at MIA shops;
- A new viewing area featuring a 90-inch flat screen TV in the upgraded MIA Hotel lobby pre-security at Central Terminal E, 2nd Level

"MIA is the *de facto* 'Gateway to Brazil,' whether it's for year-round travel to 11 fantastic destinations or for soccer fans and players traveling to the 2014 World Cup," said Miami-Dade Aviation Director Emilio T. González. "We're happy to bring all the excitement of the World Cup to our travelers over the coming month with a great lineup of attractions, regardless of their final destination."

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